

**Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, April 17, 1812 ,
from The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve
Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul
Leicester Ford.**

TO JAMES MADISON J. MSS.

Monticello, April 17, 1812.

Dear Sir, —The enclosed papers will explain themselves. Their coming to me is the only thing not sufficiently explained.

Your favor of the 3d came duly to hand. Although something of the kind had been apprehended, the embargo found the farmers and planters only getting their produce to market, and selling as fast as they could get it there. I think it caught them in this part of the State with one-third of their flour or wheat and three-quarters of their tobacco undisposed of. If we may suppose the rest of the middle country in the same situation, and that the upper and lower country may be judged by that as a mean, these will perhaps be the proportions of produce remaining in the hands of the producers. Supposing the objects of the government were merely to keep our vessels and men out of harm's way, and that there is no idea that the want of our flour will starve Great Britain, the sale of the remaining produce will be rather desirable, and what would be desired even in war, and even to our enemies. For I am favorable to the opinion which has been urged by others, sometimes acted on, and now partly so by France and Great Britain, that commerce, under certain restrictions and licenses, may be indulged between enemies mutually advantageous to the individuals, and not to their injury as belligerents. The capitulation of Amelia Island, if confirmed, might favor this object, and at any rate get off our produce now on hand. I think a people would go through a war with much less impatience if they could dispose

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of their produce, and that unless a vent can be provided for them, they will soon become querulous and clamor for peace. They appear at present to receive embargo with

perfect acquiescence and without a murmur, seeing the necessity of taking care of our vessels and seamen. Yet they would be glad to dispose of their produce in any way not endangering them, as by letting it go from a neutral place in British vessels. In this way we lose the carriage only; but better that than both carriage and cargo. The rising of the price of flour, since the first panic is passed away, indicates some prospects in the merchants of disposing of it. Our wheat had greatly suffered by the winter, but is as remarkably recovered by the favorable weather of the spring. Ever affectionately yours.